

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A group machine time slot reservation and management system including:

- a. a machine time slot reservation subsystem including storage means for storing time slot reservation information, calendar and time clock information, time slot status information, intended user ID code information, and machine control information, for a user operated group machine (UOGM);
- b. receiving and analyzing means for receiving and analyzing machine operation information including order quantity information for said UOGM;
- c. means for checking a status of any time slot corresponding with a current clock time;
- d. programmed means for operating said UOGM to run said received order quantity when said current clock time shows no reserved time slots for said UOGM;
- e. user ID verification means for receiving and processing an actual user ID code against said intended user ID code, when said current clock time corresponds to a reserved time slot; and
- f. programmed means for enabling operation of said UOGM to run said received order quantity when said actual user ID code matches said intended user ID code, thereby enabling efficient and economical management of the time of said UOGM, and that of potential users thereof in a group work environment.

2. A group machine Time Slot Reservation (TSR) process comprising:

- a. displaying on a user interface connected to a controller, a Time Slot (TS) and Time Slot Status (TSS) information screen for a User Operated Group Machine (UOGM);
- b. reviewing the Time Slot Status (TSS) information;
- c. providing Time Slot Reservation (TSR) information onto the screen for the UOGM when the TSS information shows at least one Open Time Slot (OTS) for the UOGM; and
- d. confirming and saving at least one TS as a reserved time slot responsively to the provided TSR information, thereby enabling subsequent efficient and economical management of the time of the UOGM, and the time of potential users thereof in a group work environment.

3. The group machine TSR process of **claim 2**, wherein said displaying step includes, where there is more than one UOGM, displaying a machine selection interactive window on the screen.

4. The group machine TSR process of **claim 2**, wherein said displaying step includes displaying selectable date and time calendar information on the screen.

5. The group machine TSR process of **claim 2**, wherein said displaying step includes displaying time slot symbols and time divisions for designated Time Slots for a particular UOGM during a work group's work day shift.

6. The group machine TSR process of **claim 2**, wherein said displaying step includes highlighting already reserved time slots for each calendar month, date and time of day for each UOGM.

7. The group machine TSR process of **claim 4**, wherein said step of displaying selectable date and time calendar information comprises displaying only current and future date and time selectable calendar information.

8. The group machine TSR process of **claim 4**, wherein said step of displaying time slot symbols and time divisions for designated Time Slots includes displaying fixed default TS time divisions.

9. The group machine TSR process of **claim 4**, wherein said step of displaying time slot symbols and time divisions includes displaying interactive selectable time slot symbols.

10. The group machine TSR process of **claim 4**, wherein said step of displaying interactive selectable time slot symbols includes displaying time slot symbols that open for receiving TSR information only when a time slot corresponding to a time division for such symbol is an open time slot.

11. The group machine TSR process of **claim 6**, wherein said step of highlighting already reserved time slots includes displaying contact information about the intended user.

12. The group machine TSR process of **claim 6**, wherein said step of displaying contact information about the intended user comprises displaying information identifying a work station of the intended user.

13. The group machine TSR process of **claim 6**, wherein said displaying step includes displaying and retaining a record of past present and future time slots reservation for each UOGM.

14. A group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) process comprising:

- a. receiving and analyzing order information, including an order quantity, for operating a particular UOGM;
- b. checking a status of any designated Time Slots for the particular UOGM corresponding with a current clock time;
- c. requesting an actual User ID code from the operator actually attempting to use the UOGM when the current clock time corresponds to at least a Reserved Time Slot;
- d. comparing the Actual User ID code with a stored Intended User ID code; and
- e. operating the UOGM for the received order quantity when the Actual User ID code matches the stored Intended User ID code, thereby enabling efficient and economical management of the time of the UOGM, and that of potential users thereof in a group work environment.

15. The group machine RTSM process of **claim 14**, including comparing the received order quantity information with a stored control quantity.

16. The group machine RTSM process of **claim 14**, including operating the machine for the received order quantity when the current clock time shows no reserved Time Slots for the particular UOGM.

17. The group machine RTSM process of **claim 14**, including operating the UOGM for only a stored control quantity when the received order quantity is greater than the stored control quantity and the Actual User ID code does not match the Intended User ID Code.

18. The group machine RTSM process of **claim 14**, including a step of alerting the intended user, prior to the receiving and analyzing step, responsively to stored Time Slot Reservation information.

19. A group machine Time Slot Reservation (TSR) system comprising:

a. a controller assembly including means for processing and storing information, and at least one user interface having display means for displaying stored Time Slot (TS) and Time Slot status information for a User Operated Group Machine (UOGM);

b. input means for providing Time Slot Reservation (TSR) information to said controller assembly for said UOGM when said TSS information includes at least one Open Time Slot for said UOGM; and

c. confirming and saving means for confirming and saving at least one TS as a Reserved Time Slot (RTS), for said UOGM, responsively to said TSR information, thereby enabling efficient and economical management of the time of the UOGM, and that of potential users thereof in a group work environment.

20. The group machine TSR system of **claim 19**, including alerting means communicating with said controller assembly for alerting an intended user of a Reserved Time Slot (RTS).

21. The group machine TSR system of **claim 19**, wherein said UOGM is a document copy reproduction machine.

22. The group machine TSR system of **claim 19**, wherein said controller assembly comprises a controller subassembly of said UOGM.

23. The group machine TSR system of **claim 19**, wherein said controller assembly includes a control subassembly of a personal computer (PC) work station.

24. The group machine TSR system of **claim 19**, wherein said controller assembly includes a first controller subassembly associated with a personal computer (PC) work station and having a first display means, and a second controller subassembly having a second display means located said UOGM.

25. The group machine TSR system of **claim 20**, wherein said alerting means is adapted to alert the intended user at a stored lead-time prior to a clock time corresponding to said RTS.

26. The group machine TSR system of **claim 20**, wherein said alerting means comprises a pop up reminder window for timely popping up on a work station screen of the intended user.

27. The group machine TSR system of **claim 20**, wherein said alerting means comprises a light tower including a pole and a light source having an ON state and an OFF state.

28. The group machine TSR system of **claim 27**, wherein said light source is visible remotely from various workstations within the group work environment.

29. The group machine TSR system of **claim 27**, wherein said light source is set to be in said ON state said UOGM is running, and in said OFF state when said UOGM is not running.

30. The group machine TSR system of **claim 27**, wherein said light source includes a flashing ON and OFF state.

31. The group machine TSR system of **claim 30**, wherein said light source is set to flash ON and OFF when a job being run is interrupted.

32. A group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system comprising:

- a. storage means storing time slot reservation information and control information for a user operated group machine;
- b. receiving and analyzing means for receiving and analyzing information, including order quantity information, for operating said UOGM;
- c. means for checking a status of any designated Time Slot corresponding with a current clock time;
- d. programmed means for operating said UOGM to run said received order quantity when the current clock time shows no reserved Time Slots for said UOGM;
- e. User ID verification means for receiving and processing an actual User ID code against a stored intended user ID code, when the current clock time corresponds to a Reserved Time Slot; and
- f. programmed means for enabling operation of said UOGM to run said received order quantity when said Actual User ID code matches said stored Intended User ID code, thereby enabling efficient and economical management of the time of the UOGM, and that of potential users thereof in a group work environment.

33. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 32**, including means for comparing said received order quantity with a stored control quantity.

34. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 32**, including programmed means for operating said UOGM to run said received order quantity when a current clock time shows no reserved Time Slots for said UOGM.

35. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 32**, including programmed means for operating said UOGM to run only a stored control quantity when said received order quantity is greater than the stored control quantity and said Actual User ID code does not match said Intended User ID Code.

36. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 32**, including alerting means communicating with said controller assembly for alerting an intended user of a Reserved Time Slot (RTS).

37. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said alerting means is adapted to alert the intended user at a stored lead-time prior to a clock time corresponding to said RTS.

38. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said alerting means comprises a pop up reminder window for timely popping up on a work station screen of the intended user.

39. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said alerting means comprises a light tower including a pole and a light source having an ON state and an OFF state.

40. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said UOGM is a document copy reproduction machine.

41. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said controller assembly comprises a controller subassembly of said UOGM.

42. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said controller assembly includes a control subassembly of a personal computer (PC) work station.

43. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 36**, wherein said controller assembly includes a first controller subassembly associated with a personal computer (PC) work station and having a first display means, and a second controller subassembly having a second display means located said UOGM.

44. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 39**, wherein said light source is visible remotely from various workstations within the group work environment.

45. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 39**, wherein said light source is set to be in said ON state said UOGM is running, and in said OFF state when said UOGM is not running.

46. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 38**, wherein said light source includes a flashing ON and OFF state.

47. The group machine Reservable Time Slot Management (RTSM) system of **claim 46**, wherein said light source is set to flash ON and OFF when a job being run is interrupted.